DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 022 835 UD 006 549

By-Curtis, Richard J.
ESEA PUTS FOCUS ON CHILDREN.
Pub Date Mar 68
Note-5p.
Journal Cit-Florida Schools; v30 n3 p2-5 Mar 1968
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.28
Descriptors-ATTENDANCE, BASIC SKILLS, *COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PROGRAMS, *DISADVANTAGED YOUTH, DROPOUTS, *FEDERAL PROGRAMS, POST SECONDARY EDUCATION, *READING ACHIEVEMENT, STUDENT ATTITUDES, *STUDENT IMPROVEMENT, STUDENT PROMOTION
Identifiers-Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA, Florida

The effect of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) on education in Florida is discussed. It is stated that skills, especially in reading, attendance, promotion rate, and the attitudes have improved among children in ESEA programs. The opportunities made available by ESEA in conjunction with other Federal education programs have enabled more of the States's disadvantaged children to continue their post-high school education. (NH)

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ABOUT THE COVER

Increased federal funding has had a major impact on education in Florida in recent years. Here, a youngster in a learning disability class at a special education center in Dade County listens to a recording of his own voice in a program financed under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The impact of this act is analyzed in two articles in this issue of FLORIDA SCHOOLS—ESEA PUTS FOCUS ON CHILDREN, *Page 2, and* FOLLOW THROUGH IS 'IN', *Page 25.*

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STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32304
FLOYD T. CHRISTIAN, State Superintendent

FLORIDA SCHOOLS is an official publication of the State Department of Education. Howard Jay Friedman, Editor; Al Erxleben, Assistant Editor; art, layout, and design by Raymond O'Keefe; staff photographs by Richard W. Sinclair.

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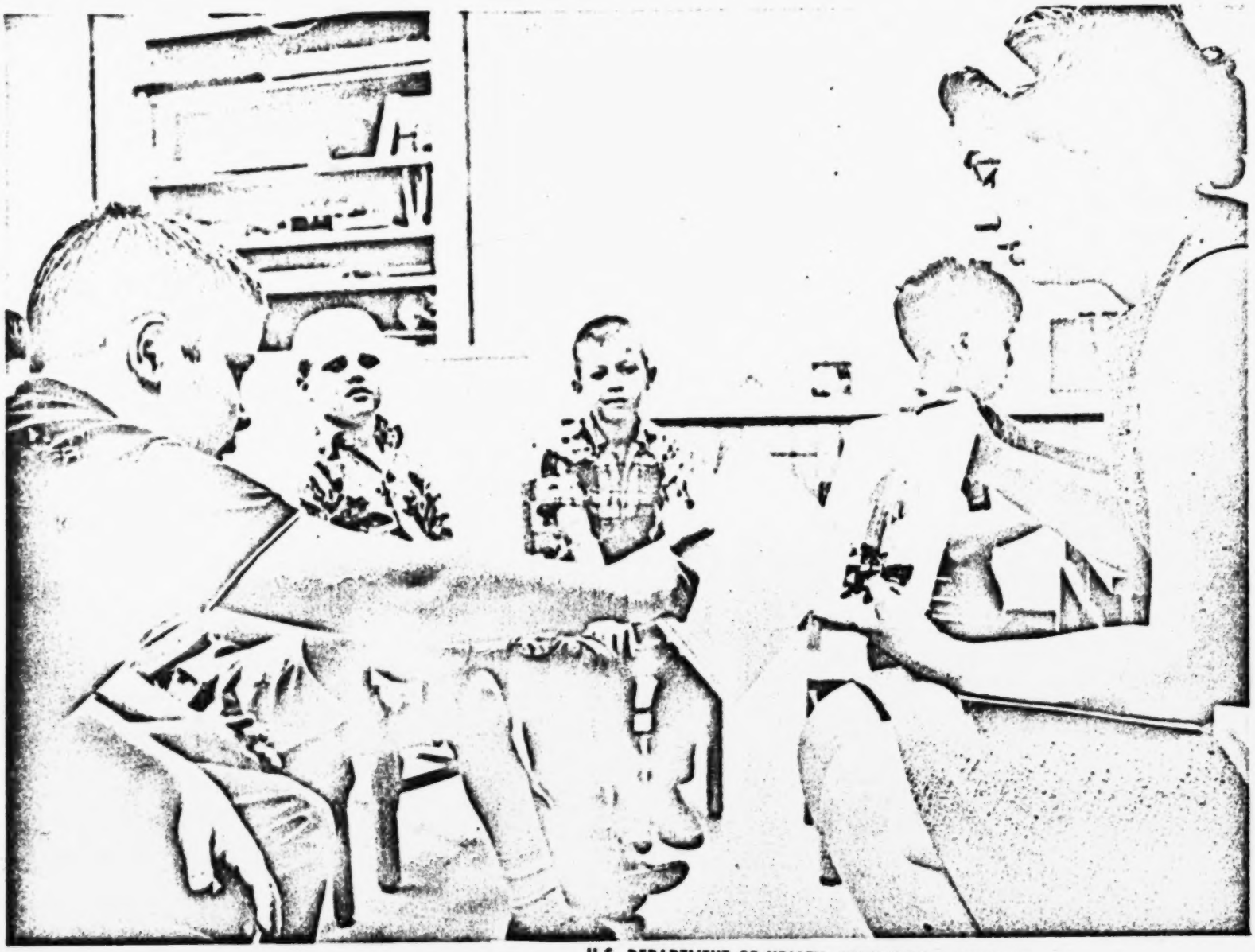
MARCH 1968



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ESEA PUTS FOCUS ON CHILDREN

On April 11, 1965, President Johnson signed into law the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. This act, which has been considered by many to be the greatest commitment ever made by the federal government to the improvement of elementary and secondary education.

The various titles and programs within the act are designed to: strengthen elementary and secondary school programs for educationally deprived children in low income areas; provide additional school library resources, textbooks and other instructional services; broaden areas of cooperative research; finance sup-

plementary educational centers and services and strengthen state departments of education.

What has been the effect of Titles I, II and III of this act on the children and on the schools of Florida?

The major and most heavily funded portion of the act is Title I, which provides financial aid to counties for the strengthening of services to educationally disadvantaged children. Under this title, Florida counties received $26,445,029 for the 1966–67 school year.

Title II of the act provides for the purchase of books, supplies, audio-visual and other instructional media. Under Title II, the Florida State Department of Education distributed $2,550,762 to 67 counties, to be used by the counties to supplement their own efforts in the area of instructional media.

Title III of ESEA is designed to fund supplementary education centers and services, which would not normally be available in a county, and to stimulate and assist in the development of exemplary educational programs, which could serve as models for regular school programs. Under Title III, 40 projects, developed and sponsored by Florida counties, were funded at a total cost of $4,398,564 during the 1966–67 school year.

Skills, Attendance Improve

During the 1966–67 school year, a quarter of a million Florida children—or almost 20 percent of the total public school enrollment—participated in ESEA programs. The cost of these activities averaged slightly more than $103 per child. As the emphasis in these programs was on service to the child, the administrative and clerical costs of ESEA programs in the 67 counties were kept to 11 percent of total ESEA expenditures. Sixty percent of the counties' allocation was devoted to instructional activity; and 25 percent of the allocation was expended for service activities, with the focus of all activities being the individual child.

BY RICHARD J. CURTIS

Mr. Curtis is evaluation consultant, federal programs, State Department of Education.

After two years of operation, it has been found that ESEA programs in Florida have produced a noticable change in the childrens' skills, in their school attendance, in their promotion rate and in their attitudes.

Children who were involved in ESEA reading programs were tested, both before and after their participation, and it was found that their reading performance moved significantly toward the performance level of the average middle class child, on whom most nationwide tests have been standardized. As indicated in this table, one of every eight students who were in the lowest quartile in the pretest, moved into one of the three upper quartiles in the post-test.

PERFORMANCE OF ESEA PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS ON STANDARDIZED READING TESTS

	25% tile Below	*26-50% tile*	*51-75%*	*76% tile*
Pretest	48%	20%	14%	18%
Post-Test	42%	22%	15%	21%

These calculations are based upon the scores of 33,330 children in grades 1 through 12 on standardized reading tests.

This change is most probably due to the heavy emphases in Titles I, II and III on the acquisition or improvement of reading skills by the educationally deprived child. The 41 counties in Florida, which had developed reading improvement programs, expended $8,111,830 or 30 percent of Title I allocation available to all counties for this purpose. As Title II is designed to improve educational media, quantitatively and qualitatively, much of the material purchased under this title also supports reading improvement activities.

Of the three most active titles of ESEA, Title III has the least emphasis on reading improvement, since it is designed to provide supplemental services, and reading is quite central to the aims of education. Of the 40 projects funded in the 1966–67 school year, two were directly and primarily interested in reading improvement, and five aimed at the improvement of reading skills only indirectly.

Effectiveness Multiplied

By using the three titles of ESEA in conjunction with other federal programs, school administrators have been able to multiply each programs' effectiveness, increase the number of students reached by the combination programs and improve the chances of success with each of the contacted students.

A second effect of ESEA programs has been the increase in the pupil attendance rate of schools receiving a large amount of ESEA service. While the absolute reduction in absenteeism has been small for schools receiving a heavy dosage of ESEA assistance, the reduction has been more than double that of schools receiving no ESEA assistance.

DAILY AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ABSENT

	Non-ESEA	*Low Level ESEA**	*High Level ESEA**
1965-66	3.51%	5.88%	7.34%
1966-67	3.39%	5.71%	7.05%
Difference	—.12%	—.17%	—.29%

As the attendance rate increases in these ESEA target schools, the dropout rate for these schools decreases.

* Low level ESEA schools refers to those schools with some on going ESEA programs. High level ESEA schools are those in which one-third or more of the students participate in ESEA activities.

A story brings a pleased smile to the face of a Miami school child at a listening station in Dade County's project language arts program, funded under Title I. Nicknamed 'Plats', the program employs the special talents of 124 project language arts teachers in helping boys and girls who have trouble with communications skills.

DROPOUT RATE PER 100 STUDENTS

	Non-ESEA	*Low Level ESEA**	*High Level ESEA**
1965-66	2.59	5.57	6.76
1966-67	2.99	5.06	5.24
Difference	+.40	—.51	—1.52

It has been estimated that this decrease in the dropout rate means that each year approximately 4,500 educationally deprived students, who would have withdrawn from school, remain to complete one more academic year. This reduction in dropout rate is occuring at a time when the dropout rate in non-ESEA schools appears to be on the rise.

The additional services, material and personnel provided under ESEA have improved the chances of academic success for the educationally deprived child. While the probability that a child from an economically deprived background will be retained in grade is more than doubled that of the average middle class child, the services available under ESEA have begun to narrow this gap. When schools were compared on the basis of their level of participation in ESEA activities, it was found that the change in the percentage of children retained in grade in the non-ESEA schools was only half the change in retention of the schools with intensive ESEA programs.

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN RETAINED IN GRADE

	Non-ESEA	*Low Level ESEA**	*High Level ESEA**
1965-66	3.51%	5.88%	7.34%
1966-67	3.39%	5.71%	7.05%
Difference	—.12%	—.17%	—.29%

ESEA programs in addition to improving performance and attendance also improved the attitudes of many children toward school, themselves and their future.

In this age of increasing technological complexity, it has become an accepted fact that to be an effective and productive member of society, some posthigh school education is necessary for most students. Prior to receiving the special attention available through ESEA programs, many of the educationally deprived children had no idea of job opportunities—and opportunities for further education—which are available to them. Projects funded under Titles I, II and III of ESEA and the National Defense Education Act were able to serve many of these children showing them that they had inherent value and demonstrated to

them that they had the ability and the opportunity to take a more active part in the growth of the country.

Partners in Society

An indication of the recognition on the part of the educationally deprived of the value of education is the number of these children who now see education beyond high school as their way to a full partnership in our society. In a recent study which questioned 34,140 graduating seniors in June 1966 and 36,969 graduating seniors in June 1967, it was found that, while the number of students anticipating some form of education beyond high school showed a statewide increase, the students from schools receiving intensive ESEA services showed the greatest percentage of increase.

PERCENTAGE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE EXPECTING SOME POST-HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

	*Non-ESEA**	*Low Level ESEA**	*High Level ESEA*
1965-66	63.16%	53.78%	43.48%
1966-67	70.04%	55.15%	53.94%
Difference	+6.88%	+1.37%	+10.46%

These figures do not necessarily represent an increase in attendance at post-high school education, for the student were simply asked their intentions and no verifying follow-up was made. The data does indicate, however, that the value of and the need for education is beginning to be recognized throughout the breadth of our society.

The success of ESEA programs has been based on three main points:

- The value of a strong reading program.
- The provision of educational materials of sufficient quantity, of high quality and meaningful to the student.
- The value of small classes and necessary remedial and supplementary services.

The major emphasis of Title I has been to develop effective reading programs in more than two-thirds of Florida's counties. Titles I and II have both been utilized to provide effective educational materials in sufficient quantity so that they will be available and interesting to the students of the greatest educational need. Thirdly, Title I has been used by the counties to provide additional teachers, in order to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio, and to provide special services, such as school psychologists and social workers. In addition, Title III, to a great extent, and Title I, to a lesser extent, have been used to provide supplemental services, such as traveling museums and area science centers, which allow all students to participate in a more creative learning experience.

With the assistance of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Florida educators were able to change the 1966–67 school year from "another backward step" to the year of the child. □

FLORIDA'S ESEA REPORT CARD

In its continuing evaluation of ESEA programs, the State Department of Education, Office of Federal-State Relations, has found the following achievements resulting from the 1966-67 ESEA programs:

The provision of special reading activities for 12 percent of the total public school enrollment.

The purchase of 508,851 books, 4,550 periodical subscriptions, 121,876 pieces of audio-visual materials and 10,043 textbooks with a catalog value of $2,276,081.

Reduced student and teacher ratios and increased use of teacher aides.

Increased involvement of parents in school activities.

Creation of new materials more suitable to the underprivileged child.

Funding of 2,121 additional full-time teaching positions in grades K-12.

Eleven cultural enrichment projects such as traveling museums and art centers.

Improvement of reading skills of educationally deprived children.

Improved attendance rate of children receiving ESEA services.

An increase in the number and proportion of target children promoted to the next grade.